

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8309

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT PINS GJ

SUBJ: ANTI-GAIRY FORCES DEMONSTRATE PEACEFULLY

1. ACCORDING TO A CBC RADIO BROADCAST, THE SEAMEN AND WATER-FRONT WORKERS UNION AND THE NEW JEWEL MOVEMENT, BOTH GROUPS OPPOSED TO THE GAIRY REGIME, HELD SEPARATE DEMONSTRATIONS ON JAN 21 IN GRENADA'S CAPITAL OF ST GEORGE'S TO COMMEMORATE THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF "BLOODY MONDAY." ON THAT DAY LAST YEAR, POLICE AND SECRET POLICE BROKE UP A LAWFUL DEMONSTRATION BY ANTI-GAIRY FORCES AND ALLEGEDLY MURDERED RUPERT BISHOP AND INJURED MANY OTHER PERSONS IN THE PROCESS. (BISHOP WAS THE FATHER OF NJM CO-ORDINATING SECRETARY MAURICE BISHOP.) BLOODY MONDAY TOUCHED OFF TWO MONTHS OF VIOLENT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN THE GAIRY REGIME AND ITS OPPONENTS WHICH PARALYZED THE ALREADY STAGNANT GRENADIAN ECONOMY.

2. THE SWWU, ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL GROUPS INVOLVED IN LAST YEAR'S CONFRONTATIONS, HELD AN ECUMENICAL SERVICE AT OTWAY HOUSE, SCENE OF THE BLOODY MONDAY DEMONSTRATIONS AND HEADQUARTERS OF THE UNION, TO COMMEMORATE THE EVENT. MINISTERS OF THE ANGLICAN AND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES IN GRENADA HAD BEEN INVITED

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TO CONDUCT THE SERVICE; HOWEVER THEY FAILED TO SHOW UP.

IN THE MINISTERS' ABSENCE, A LAY READER IN THE ANGLICAN CHURCH, CURTIS STEWARD, PRESIDENT OF THE GRENADA TECHNICAL AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION, AND CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE OF TWENTY-TWO, CONDUCTED THE SERVICE. AFTER THE SERVICE, THOSE IN ATTENDANCE PROCEEDED TO THE ST GEORGE'S CEMETARY WHERE SERVICES WERE HELD AT THE GRAVE SITE OF RUPERT BISHOP.

3. THE NJM ALSO MARKED THE OCCASION WITH A PUBLIC MEETING AND DEMONSTRATION IN THE AFTERNOON FOLLOWING THE SWWU'S MORNING SERVICES. THE NJM DEMONSTRATION, WHICH REPORTEDLY ATTRACTED MORE THAN 2,000 PERSONS, PROCEEDED ALONG ROUTES DESIGNATED BY THE POLICE FROM OTWAY HOUSE TO RUPERT BISHOP'S GRAVE WHERE ANOTHER RELIGIOUS SERVICE WAS HELD, THIS TIME PRESIDED OVER BY ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIEST AUSTIN MILLNOCK. HOWEVER, THE NJM DEFIED POLICE INSTRUCTIONS UPON RETURNING TO THE CAREENAGE FROM THE CEMETARY BY TAKING A ROUTE DIFFERENT FROM THAT ORDERED BY POLICE. AT ONE POINT, THE NJM DEMONSTRATORS' ROUTE WAS BLOCKED BY A JEEP LOAD OF HEAVILY ARMED POLICE; HOWEVER, THERE WERE NO INCIDENTS AS DEMONSTRATORS AND POLICE SIMPLY AVOIDED A CONFRONTATION. LATER, SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE NJM ADDRESSED THIS CROWD AT OTWAY HOUSE.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE PM GAIRY'S WARNING IN HIS NEW YEAR'S DAY ADDRESS TO THE NATION THAT DEMONSTRATORS WOULD BE DEALT WITH HARSHLY, THESE DEMONSTRATIONS DID NOT RESULT IN CONFRONTATIONS. GAIRY APPARENTLY HAD HIS STRONG SECURITY FORCES UNDER STRICT ORDERS TO LET THEM PROCEED PEACEFULLY.
SIMMS

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